

CLASS SPECIFICATION
Planning Assistant

FLSA Status: Covered
Union Representation: City of Portland Professional Employees Association (COPPEA)

GENERAL PURPOSE

Under direct supervision, assists city planners who are performing land use reviews, permit reviews, land use studies and other planning activities; reviews applications for completeness; conducts basic research of property information; compiles data; performs initial analysis and fact checking; drafts initial findings and written reports; performs other related duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Planning Assistants provide paraprofessional support to city planners by performing routine research, review and writing assignments. Work is closely reviewed for quality, accuracy and appropriate application of code or specific planning policy.

Planning Assistant is distinguished from Associate Planner in that incumbents in the latter class have assigned projects or case loads, are responsible for writing and signing findings, and have frequent and direct interaction with applicants, advisory groups and the general public.

Planning Assistant is distinguished from administrative support positions by requiring basic knowledge and/or coursework in urban planning, and an understanding of planning theory and the principles, policies and purposes of planning and zoning code provisions. Administrative support positions primarily have knowledge and expertise in the administrative procedures and processes of the bureau.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any one position in this class may not perform all the duties listed below, nor do the listed examples of duties include all similar and related duties that may be assigned to this class.

1. Reviews land use applications for completeness; drafts letters to applicants notifying them of missing documents/information.
2. Researches and documents land use history; verifies existence of lot and/or lot of record; locates and records lot-related provisions or conditions.
3. Reads codes related to application and compares code requirements to proposed actions; drafts assessments of whether proposal meets code restrictions/requirements.

4. Drafts a variety of written communications for planner signature, including letters to applicants/public specifying and explaining zoning information, land use history and other relevant or requested information for a given property or study area.
5. Assists planners in completing reports by inserting relevant facts and details into a standard template, drafting compliance findings for various code requirements, or drafting portion of land use reports.
6. Assists planners with preparation of materials for public hearings or other public meetings; customizes Power Point presentations; rearranges order of pictures and slides; inserts relevant facts for particular case or project being presented.
7. Conducts research to identify numbers and types of permits or land use reviews, as assigned by supervisor.
8. Attends meetings and participates in training opportunities.

OTHER DUTIES

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

1. Basic knowledge of urban planning theory and principles, and related fields such as urban design, landscape architecture or environmental science principles and practices.
2. Statistical analysis techniques and formulae relevant to the planning process.
3. Terminology, symbols, methods, techniques and instruments used in planning.
4. Computer operation and standard and specialized software applicable to the work.
5. Office practices and procedures.

Ability to:

1. Understand and apply City zoning and land use regulations.
2. Identify key planning issues associated with a project or study.
3. Review forms or spreadsheets and identify missing information or documentation.
4. Identify and compile pertinent information from electronic and paper files.

5. Read maps and site plans.
6. Effectively communicate in verbal and written formats.
7. Organize work effectively.
8. Exercise sound independent judgment and reach appropriate conclusions within established policies and guidelines.
9. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, representatives from other bureaus and others encountered in the course of the work.

Training and Experience:

A typical way of obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined above is college-level course work in urban planning or a closely related field; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Licenses; Certificates; Special Requirements:

A valid state driver's license may be required for certain assignments.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEMANDS

Persons with disabilities may be able to perform the essential duties of this class with reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation will be evaluated on an individual basis and depends, in part, on the specific requirements for the job, the limitations related to disability and the ability of the hiring bureau to accommodate the limitation.

Class History:

Adopted: 05-04-05 New class Planning Assistant (7751) created.
Revised: 10-17-05 Union representation changed from Nonrepresented to COPPEA. Job class number changed from 7751 to 6130.
Revised: 08-01-06 Spec formatting modified.
Revised: 08-07-06 Revised FLSA status from "Non-exempt" to "Covered."
June 2009 - Change Job Class number from 6130 to 30000374, due to system change.